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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 ARA-10 TRSE-00 OMB-01
ACDA-12 EB-08 IO-13 AID-05 /109 W
----------013461 301518Z /72
O R 301445Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5632
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 2658

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINS, PINR, CM, CD, CG
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER SPEAKS ON CAMEROON'S FOREIGN POLICY

1. ON MAY 26 I CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER JEAN KEUTCHA AND MISS SIMONE MAIRIE, FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR OF EUROPEAN, AMERICAN AND OCEANIC AFFAIRS, TO REPORT ON MY CONSULTATIONS AND HAVE GENERAL TOUR D'HORIZON. FOLLOWING POINTS MADE ABOUT CAMEROON' FOREIGN POLICY.

2. WE REVIEWED THE AMERICAN POLICY OF LEAVING AFRICAN PROBLEMS FOR AFRICAN SOLUTIONS, AND ASKED HOW CAMEROON VIEWED THE RECENT ACTIVITIES OF FRANCE AND BELGIUM IN SHABA OR ANY ASPECTS OF OUR HANDLING THE ISSUES. THE FOREIGN MINISTER WARMED TO THE OCCASION, NOTING THAT CAMEROON HAD MAINTAINED A CONSISTENT POLICY. WHEN AN AFRICAN COUNTRY ASKS ITS FRIENDS FOR HELP, HE APPLAUDS A FAVORABLE RESPONSE, AND MOBUTU HAD MADE CLEAR THAT HE WANTED HELP. HE SAW THE FRENCH AND THE BELGIANS, AND BY EXTENSION THE US AND OTHERS, AS HAVING BEEN INVITED BY MOBUTU TO DEAL WITH THE INVADERS IN SHABA. THERE COULD BE NO OBJECTION TO AN INVITATION TO A FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT TO COME AND ASSIST IN DEALING WITH AN
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INVASION. FRANCE HELPS ITS FRIENDS, BUT IS ALREADY IN CHAD AND WESTERN SAHARA, AS WELL AS SHABA. ITS RESOURCES CAN GO ONLY SO FAR. CLEARLY CAMEROON NEEDS GREATER SECURITY THAN SHE CAN COUNT ON FROM THAT SOURCE, INCLUDING STRENGTHENING HER OWN ARMED FORCES. I POINTED OUT THT SO OFTEN THE OAU SEEMED TO WANT TO KEEP OUTSIDE POWERS OUT OF AFRICA AND AT THE SAME TIME SEEMED TO WANT US TO "DO SOMETHING" ABOUT SOVIET AND CUBAN ACTIVITIES

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IN AFRICA. HE NOTED THAT AFRICAN CULTURE IS NOT BY NATUCI
LPOMPATIBLE WITH COMMUNISM, WITH MISS MAIRIE NODDING VIGOROUSLY.
HE SAID AFRICANS REACH FOR COMMUNISM THE WAY A DROWNING MAN WHO
SEES A CROCODILE MAY REACH OUT FOR IT AS SOMETHING TO HOLD ON,
BUT HE SOON REALIZES THE MISTAKE HE IS MAKING. HE INDICATED
THT OUTSIDERS DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE EARNESTNESS OF THOSE
WHO SEE REBELS ENCOURAGED BY SOVIET AND CUBAN FORCES ATTACKING
SOVEREIGN TERRITORY. IN REVIEWING CAMEROON'S BORDERS THE FOREIGN
MINISTER NOTED THAT MUCH OF CHAD IS CONTROLLED BY REBELS AND
THE CONGO AND EQUATORIAL GUINEA SHARE BORDERS WITH CAMEROON, AS
DOES CAE. CONSIDERING THAT ASSORTMENT OF NEIGHBORS,HE CONSIDERED IT
SELF-EVIDENT THAT CAMEROON WOULD NEED TO BE CONSCIOUS OF SECURITY.
(SEVERAL TIMES IN THE PAST HE AND OTHER CAMEROON SPOKESMEN
HAVE ALLUDED TO THE CUBANS AS SURROGATES FOR THE SOVIETS.)

3. IN SPEAKING OF RHODESIA HE NOTED THE DESIRABILITY OF FORWARD
MOVEMENT AND THE CONTINUED SUPPORT OF CAMEROON FOR A SOLUTION
WHERE ALL THE PARTIES WOULD BE REPRESENTED IF PEACE WERE TO BE
ACHIEVABLE. IN RESPONDING TO THE SUGGESTION THAT WE NEED OVERT
SUPPORT FOR OUR POLICIES ON THE PART OF SMALLER NATIONS WHO
APPROVE THEM PRIVATELY, HE INDICATED SOME RELUCTANCE TO MAKE
PRONOUNCEMENTS WITHOUT COMMANDING ALL THE INFORMATION REQUIRED.
AGAIN A SENSE OF NOT BEING SUFFICIENTLY BRIEFED TO PROVIDE
LEADERSHIP WAS APPARENT.

4. WE SPOKE OF THE COMMON FUND AND OF THE HOPE OF THE UNITED
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STATES THAT THERE COULD BE A BEGINNING ON THE BASIS OF INTERNATIONAL
COMMODITY AGREEMENTS ALREADY IN FORCE. HE SEEMED TO ACCEPT
THIS REASONING. I SPOKE OF OUR CONVERSATION WITH THE MINISTER OF
FINANCE AND OUR REQUEST TO WASHINGTON TO GET US AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE IN WRITING A STATEMENT OF OUR CURRENT POSITION.
HE SAW THE COMMON FUND AS A KEY TO SOME OF THE PROBLEMS THAT
BESET AFRICA AND WE AGREED THAT WORKING TOGETHER FOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT IS PERHAPS THE SUREST ROUTE TO A VIABLE AFRICA
WHICH NEED NOT REACH OUT FOR CROCODILES FOR ITS SALAVATION.

5. COMMENT: PARAGRAPH 2 ABOVE TOUCHES IN PART ON CERNS RAISED
REFTEL. SEPTEL SUMMARIZING CAMEROONIAN PERCEPTIONS
SOVIET/CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA AND GIVING REFERENCES FOLLOWS.

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